

DAILY BULLETIN

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BUSH CALLS FOR NEW ERA IN TRANSATLANTIC UNITY TO ADVANCE PEACE

Cites settlement of Israeli-Palestinian conflict as great opportunity

President Bush has called for a new era of unity in transatlantic relations to seize a historic moment of opportunity to advance peace, democracy and prosperity around the world.

Speaking February 21 in Brussels, Belgium, Bush cited the special role the alliance of the United States and Europe has to play in the world -- as the main pillar of security, the engine of the economy and a beacon of hope for poor and oppressed.

"As past debates fade, as great duties become clear, let us begin a new era of transatlantic unity," he said.

The president said that the greatest opportunity and immediate goal for the alliance is peace in the Middle East, adding that a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is now "within reach."

But Bush said that other parties must meet their responsibilities in order for peace to prevail: Arab states must end provocative media campaigns, cut off funding for terrorism, stop supporting extremist education and establish normal relations with Israel; Palestinian leaders must confront and dismantle terrorist groups, fight corruption, encourage free enterprise and establish democracy; and Israel must freeze settlement

activity, help Palestinians build a thriving economy and ensure that a new Palestinian state is truly viable.

“A state of scattered territories will not work,” Bush said.

The president said that a solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can energize the drive for reform in the broader Middle East. He cited Saudi Arabia and Egypt as countries that could set an example and show the way to democracy in the region.

Bush said that the U.S.-European alliance must not only encourage reforms in the Middle East, but also must support them in practical ways.

As for Iraq, Bush acknowledged that some European countries chose not to support the war in that country. But, he said, now all nations have an interest in the success of the country and called for concerted efforts to help Iraq improve stability and build democracy.

“Now is the time for established democracies to give tangible political, economic and security assistance to the world’s newest democracy,” he said.

On another issue, Bush said that his administration is working with three European countries (France, Germany and the United Kingdom) that are trying, through diplomacy, to persuade Iran to end its nuclear programs and comply with international law.

Although he said that “no option can be taken permanently off the table” when addressing the threat Iran’s nuclear ambitions pose to the “security of free nations,” he also differentiated between Iraq and Iran where, he said, “We’re in the early stages of diplomacy.”

Bush said that the United States supports a strong Europe because it needs a strong partner, and that it sees Russia as part of Europe. But he said that the Russian government must renew a commitment to democracy and the rule of law in order for Russia to move closer to Europe and the transatlantic community.

“We must always remind Russia ... that our alliance stands for a free press, a vital opposition, the sharing of power, and the rule of law -- and the United States and all European countries should place democratic reform at the heart of their dialogue with Russia,” Bush said.

The president also spoke about cooperation on the War on Terror, economic development, trade, climate change,

the fight against the HIV/AIDS epidemic and humanitarian aid.

NATO LAUDED AS “CENTERPIECE” OF U.S. EFFORTS IN EUROPE

President to discuss Iraq, peacekeeping operations with alliance leaders

Washington - President Bush views NATO as the “centerpiece” of U.S. efforts in Europe and the president’s discussions with alliance leaders February 22 will include strategy for peacekeeping operations in Kosovo and Afghanistan, as well as Iraqi reconstruction, senior administration officials said February 21.

NATO has begun to produce better, closer cooperation with Arab countries and with Israel, the officials told reporters during a press briefing in Brussels, Belgium. “We’ve never had a relationship in terms of military partnership, military training, military exercises before,” one of the U.S. officials said. “On the agenda tomorrow will be discussions of how we can do that.” The official pointed out that Israel, Kuwait and Bahrain have submitted plans to NATO for increased cooperation. “This is an issue that’s going to take on a great deal of prominence later in the year,” the official added.

On Iraq, there is recognition that all NATO countries should be doing something to help the new government, the official said. “We hope that by tomorrow, the NATO allies, the European allies, each will have announced some measure that will indicate support for Iraq,” from providing troops to training or financial support, the official said.

There currently are 8,500 NATO troops in Kabul and the north and west of Afghanistan on peacekeeping missions, the administration official said. In the next four to five months, NATO troops will move into the southern part of Afghanistan, the official said. “And we’re beginning to talk about increasing integration of the U.S.-led coalition in the east and southern part of Afghanistan with the NATO operation itself,” the official said.

The official also said it is very important to maintain the NATO peacekeeping presence in Kosovo, currently at 18,000, because “2005 is likely to be a difficult year.”

The Ukraine also will be a major focus of the discussions. The United States believes that NATO should be open to a new relationship with Ukraine. Little progress was made in fulfilling a NATO partnership plan developed a few years ago with the Ukrainians because of the political situation there, the official said, "but there's strong hope that in 2005 we might deepen our partnership" with Ukraine.

AFRICAN-AMERICANS WERE ALSO FOUNDERS OF AMERICA, RICE SAYS

Secretary's address celebrates African-American History Month

By Susan Ellis

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington - Condoleezza Rice helped celebrate African-American History Month February 18 by telling an audience at the State Department about the importance of her family's values -- faith, family and education - and how they helped her to become the first female African-American secretary of state.

Rice spoke to an auditorium filled with members of Congress, African and American diplomats, students from a local elementary school and others drawn from inside and outside the State Department. She wove a story composed of her family's triumph over adversity and a patriotic message in which black leaders triumphed by appealing to America's principles and values.

By these successful appeals, she said, black leaders participated in the "second founding" of America, "an America in which the great civil rights leaders and those before them gave us the foundation that we have today that allows for somebody like me to emerge as America's secretary of state."

She asked rhetorically, "What has made this African American community prosper and thrive despite the tremendous obstacles since Africans first landed here in America? I would say it's a story of faith . . . it's a story of family; the importance of family ties that hold us together.

"When we talk about family, we mean extended family in the African-American experience," she continued. "So black Americans, African-Americans, have always depended on faith and family and education. In the most hostile times, in the most difficult times, that's what saw us through. But something else saw us through. And that was a belief in America and its values and its principles - even when America didn't believe in us."

She recounted her own experience in bringing that truth to light. Her parents were college-educated, her father a guidance counselor and eventually the administrator at the University of Denver (Colorado) "but he got there and my mother got there because they had parents who cared about education," she said.

Rice said the first in her family to really care about education was her paternal grandfather. "Faith and family and education came together in Granddaddy Rice, a poor sharecropper's son in Ewtah, Alabama. One day he decided he wanted to get book learning ... so he asked people coming through, in the parlance of the day, how a 'colored man' could go to college and they said, 'If you get some money together and go about 60 miles down the road, there's Stillman College, an historically black college, in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. And they educate young colored men.' So he got his cotton together and he took off for Stillman College."

After the first year, having paid for his college with cotton, they asked how he was going to pay for his second year, Rice recounted. "He said he didn't have any more cotton and they said he would have to leave. And he asked (pointing to other students) 'Well, how are those boys going to college?' And the college official said, 'They have what's called a scholarship. And if you wanted to be a Presbyterian minister, you could have a scholarship too.' And my grandfather said 'That's exactly what I had in mind.'"

To the audience's laughter and applause Rice continued "And my family has been Presbyterian and college-educated ever since.

"So black Americans, African-Americans, have always depended on faith and family and education. In the most hostile times, in the most difficult times, that's what saw us through. But something else saw us through. And that was a belief in America and its values and its principles - even when America didn't believe in us."

Speaking of African-American civil rights leaders, she said black Americans' belief in America and its faith and its principles "was so strong that [the great black 19th century abolitionist] Frederick Douglass didn't appeal outside of America's principles and values, he appealed to America's principles and values for America to be true to itself. It was such that Martin Luther King didn't appeal outside of America's principles and values, he appealed to America to be true to itself in [promoting] progress for black Americans.

"It was true that people like Dr. Dorothy Height, the only woman among the 'big six' [social activists] appealed not outside of America's values but to America's values to challenge America to be true to itself." Height, a tiny woman who will be 93 in March, beamed from the stage where she sat with two other speakers.

"That should remind each and every one of us, African American, European American, whatever we are, that the important thing that the Founders left to us, was not a perfect America by any means, but an America that had principles that allowed impatient patriots to appeal to those principles and to tell America to be true to itself," Rice said.

"And now as we talk about the spread of freedom and liberty to places where it has not yet been known, we need to remember that human beings are by their very nature imperfect and therefore human institutions will be imperfect," she continued.

In a reference to other nations who have yet to reach the state of opportunity that America has, Rice said: "If we have principles of human dignity and liberty and freedom, those principles will guide impatient patriots to appeal not outside of those principles but to those principles to challenge their leaders and their countries to be true to themselves.

"That's the story of African Americans in America, who in appealing to America to be true to itself, in challenging America to be what America needed to be, participated in the second founding" of America, an America in which the great civil rights leaders and those before them gave us the foundation that we have today that allows for somebody like me to emerge as America's secretary of state," Rice concluded.

Other African-American speakers included civil rights activists Bernard LaFayette Jr., Dorothy Height, and Romeo Crennel, head coach of the Cleveland Browns

football team. The master of ceremonies was Ambassador Ruth A. Davis.

BUSH DESIGNATES ALLGEIER AS ACTING U.S. TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

Ambassador currently serves as deputy USTR

President Bush announced his intention to designate Peter F. Allgeier as acting U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), according to a statement released by the White House February 18.

Allgeier will serve in place of outgoing USTR Robert Zoellick, who has been nominated as deputy secretary of state.

Ambassador Allgeier currently serves as deputy USTR, responsible for supervising U.S. trade negotiations with Europe, the Middle East, Latin America, the Caribbean, Mexico and Canada. His duties included negotiating the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and implementing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Following is the text of the White House statement:

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
February 18, 2005

President George W. Bush today announced his intention to designate one individual to serve in his administration:

The President intends to designate Peter F. Allgeier, of Virginia, to be Acting United States Trade Representative.

Pleases Note: Most texts and transcript mentioned in the U.S. Mission Daily Bulletin are available via our homepage: www.usmission.ch

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